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Suspense in the Interim

You think there was suspense in Washington before election day. What we've got now is election day squared.

And why not? What are 500 jobs next to a couple of thousand? Just to count the first-string slots.

Suddenly, the resume has become an art form. Also an industry. The market value of reference letters is at least as volatile as Dow-Jones. The number of unreturned phone calls around town can be matched only by the number of old classmates rediscovered on transition teams by persons not on transition teams.

Every federal office building is turning out rumors the way Detroit used to turn out cars, each of them shiny with promise for one set of people and emitting a sinister glow of threat, like an approaching forest fire, for another. Even the Jean Harris murder trial can't hold anybody's attention next to the latest on who's got the inside track at State.

The dire predictors are as busy as real es-

tate brokers. Busier, now that they have subdivided so extensively.

See, there are the ones who go around shaking their heads over what the Pentagon and the CIA are going to come out with in January. Give or take a little overlap, they're a different group from the ones who are warning that the Moral Majority will have s-x banned from the dictionary before you can say "Panama."

Needless to say, they're a quite different group from the viewers-with-alarm who say the liberals are taking over again already. Look at Baker. Look at both Bakers. Changed his mind about the Department of Education pretty fast, didn't he?

Easily distinguishable from the dire predictors who look back at the Eisenhower influx and mutter the dread acronym "RIF." Or from the direst of them all, the cynics who look around Washington and say, "*Plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose.*"

Still, it will keep us all in suspense at least until January.